



The I/O^{June 1988} Connector

The Newsletter of the San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts

**Importing all those neat MAC
pictures with PICSW7**



THE SAN DIEGO ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

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SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

The editor welcomes all submissions. They must arrive by the 2nd Tuesday of the month to be printed in the next month's newsletter. Mail printed copy or 3.5" ST format disks with return postage to the club P.O. Box, or upload to the S.D.A.C.E. bulletin board by the 2d Monday of the month. Text must be in ST-Writer, 1ST WORD, WORD WRITER, WORD PERFECT, or ASCII format. Graphics must be hard-copy for the time being...

The Pursuit of Happiness by Tom Briant

No more lame excuses for missing meetings! Read what the Panama Canal Atari Computer Users Group puts up with: "Sorry we could not have our April meeting. As you all know, because of the political situation, we did not feel it was safe to have the meeting: stores were closed (on strike), lots of soldiers in the Army bases, tensions in Panama City, etc. These are difficult times for our country!"

Apparently Atari intends to upgrade GEMDOS in the next ROM upgrade. If you don't want to wait, though, you can take advantage of at least two supplementary graphic shells, VDOS and NEO-DESK. VDOS is shareware, available now on the SDACE-BBS (SIG4), but full documentation costs \$25 from Marathon Computer Press. NEO-DESK costs \$29.95 at Atari dealers. Both make a hard disk easier to live with.

Speaking of graphics shells, G.O.E. (Graphics Operating Environment) from Merrill Ward for the 8-bits will hopefully arrive this summer. Costing \$50-\$60, this super cartridge will feature the operating system, a word processor, a drawing program, printer drivers, an icon editor, and several fonts. The previous information was courtesy of Current Notes, and neither the N.F.L. nor the N.B.A. may use it without the permission of Current Notes.

"Herb Code", who writes for the A.B.A.C.U.S. newsletter, states he would prefer to see Berkeley Softworks' G.E.O.S., now on the C-64/C-128 and Apple II, on the Atari, "instead of some vaporous look-alike". The author of G.O.E. told me that Berkeley Softworks will not produce a Atari G.E.O.S. due to their close relationship with Commodore. They don't need the grief. As for that "vaporous look-alike" remark, how about you S.D.A.C.E. 8-bit owners doing some beta-testing and becoming the first Atari owner on your block to make Commodorians (?) jade with envy? Just leave a note on our new expanded BBS, or call

the author at 270-0111. Answering machines are standing by...

Of course, with any good graphic shell, you need all the resolution you can get. Right now, the ST has only 640 by 400 monochrome, 640 by 200 color. At the May COMDEX, however, ISD demonstrated their Calamus desktop publishing package with a 19 inch monitor running 1280 by 960 monochrome. They achieved this with a video card plugged into the Mega's expansion slot, and a patched TOS on disk. As to when this marvelous card will appear on the retail market, who knows?

Enough of future wonders. How about more immediate problems, such as P/D software documentation taking up too much room. Someone ought to write a program that prints an ASCII file in two columns of condensed elite print with an option for even numbered pages on the front and odd pages on the back. Someone did and it's up on the board now as 2COLNMS.ARC. This marvel, written in GFA BASIC, even prints 1ST Word files in 2 columns, although you only get plain vanilla text without **bolding** or *italics*. While we're discussing wish lists, how about an accessory allowing you to switch between the QWERTY and Dvorak keyboards? Done. Look for XUTIS.ARC. Finally, how about a reliable 11-sector formatter? Try MEGAFORM.ARC aus Deutschland, whose Test Drive option determines if your disk drive can format out to 83 tracks. Mine wouldn't (drat!), but with only 80 tracks and 11 sectors, I got 880K per disk.

I mentioned various items on our SDACE-BBS, now supporting both 8-bits and the ST, which now has 15 SIGS and 60 megabytes. It doesn't support ATASCII yet, but you can leave messages, such as "Hey, I got this great demo of BBS software that supports 40/80 columns, ATASCII, on-line games, etc. Where can I send it so the sysop can evaluate it?" That's the kind of messages

the board needs!

Finally, this month's cover. I chose Miss June because she looks better than last month's Bill the Cat. I converted her directly from a MacPaint file into a high-rez DEGAS file using *Pic Switch 0.7*, an indispensable utility for viewing, printing, and translating Atari picture file formats. Considering all the great MacPaint clip art available, I advise you desktop publishers to get it and send the author, John Brochu, a shareware pay-

Atari BBS List

SDACE-BBS XE/ST 284-3821

COMPUTER PLUS XE/ST 691-7862

COMPUTER OUTLET ST 282-6815

COMPUTER BLVD ST 670-1095 (NEW!)

ST-MIDI CONNECTION ST 452-7535

SMART 520 ST ST 480-9686

SMART 520 ST ST 726-4419

THE LORD'S HOUSE XE 579-7354

THE LOONEY BIN ST 390-9470

Souping Up 1st Word

by Tom Briant

I advocate WordPerfect as the high-end ST word processor, but I still use the 1st Word v1.06 Atari included with my 1040. 1st Word has its quirks, such as requiring you to save before printing, and its good points, such as making sure rank amateurs **don't** forget to save what they just printed. After using 1st Word for some time, I know some ways to enhance its performance:

1. Run it from a ram disk: 1st Word's performance picks up when you run it from a ram disk. You also don't clutter your physical disk with backup text files. You must include 4 files-1st Word.PRG, 1st Word.RSC, 1st PRNT.PRG, 1st PRNT.DOT or 1st PRNT.DSY-on your ram disk, and you need at least a 200K ram disk to hold the 140K of program files with sufficient space for text files. **In order to print from a ram disk, your text file must lie on that ram disk!!**

2. Install a better file selector: The GEM File Selector is o.k., but you can do better. **Much better.** Applications & Design Software's Universal Item Selector is the File Selector Atari should put in the revised GEMDOS and is cheap at \$15.95. This product's demo version lies in the public domain and improves the basic box 100%, as do several other P/D file selectors.

3. Rewrite your print driver: I hate it when the basic LX-80 print driver does that form feed at the end of printing. I also like to switch between pica, elite and condensed print, or any combination. So I rewrote the LX-80 printer driver. I don't get true WYSIWYG, but the conveniences outweigh that.

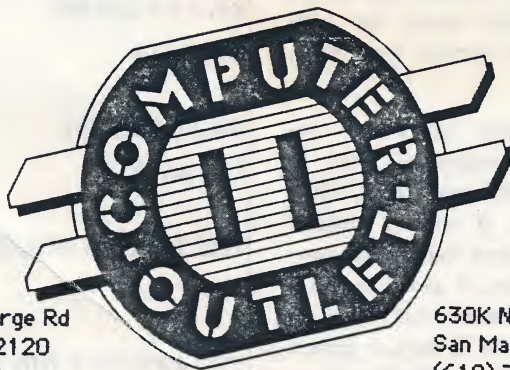
4. When running 1st Word from a ram disk, you can easily switch printer drivers from one delivering true

WYSIWYG to one with some special text effects. How? Simple. After rewriting your custom print driver, store it in a folder or change the name from 1ST_WORD.DOT to SPECIAL.DOT. You can then retrieve it from your physical disk into 1ST_WORD, then save it on your ram disk as 1ST_WORD.DOT using the "SAVE AS" option on the File menu. An alert box appears, asking if you want to overwrite the 1ST_PRNT.DOT file. Check on "OK" to install the new driver.

5. As you grow more proficient, you begin to wish you could use keyboard commands instead of the mouse. The Winter 1987 START magazine has the STARTkey accessory. The bulletin board has 1STMARCO.ARC, a file for STARTkey which enables 1st Word to accept keyboard commands. Save your mouse for desktop publishing.

CAUTION

COMPUTER OUTLET MAY BE HABIT FORMING



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PUTTING TEXT ON GR.8 (RR MILLER)

Graphics mode 8 plots on the Atari screen are the highest quality plots that can be made on the computer screen and these plots are very easy to print on a dot matrix printer. Many examples of these plots have shown up in the last few issues of our club newsletter.

One program that I have used many times over the last 8 years is CHAR8.OBJ which allows my BASIC programs to place text on GR.8 plots. CHAR8.OBJ loads from the DOS menu (Option L) into Atari memory page 6. CHAR8.OBJ will stay resident until you turn off the computer or until some other program uses page 6 and wipes out CHAR8.OBJ.

The following program (MAKECHAR.BAS) will create CHAR8.OBJ on your disk. You only need to run MAKECHAR.BAS once and after that you can copy CHAR8.OBJ to any other disk. To test the use of CHAR8.OBJ, I have included a short program called TESTCHAR.BAS. Line 80 of TESTCHAR.BAS tells BASIC to run a machine language program at memory location 1536 and pass that program the parameters 1, 5, the location of T\$ and the length of T\$. The X position for printing the string is 1 and the Y position is 5. For a detailed explanation of the USR function, see the Atari ASSEMBLER/EDITOR manual page 68.

So here's what you must do.

1. Type in MAKECHAR.BAS and run it.
2. Go to DOS and select option L and give DOS the filename CHAR8.OBJ. After DOS loads CHAR8, you can go to BASIC and plot all the graphics text you like.
3. Go to BASIC and load TESTCHAR.BAS. Run it and you will get a frame with TEST STRING plotted inside.

The easy way to do all this is come to the next club meeting and I will give you a copy of these programs. CHAR8 is very handy for putting labels and titles on plots. Have fun.

```

1 REM RR MILLER, 18 MAR 88
2 REM THIS PROGRAM CREATES A FILE
3 REM ON DISK CALLED CHAR8.OBJ
4 REM CHAR8.OBJ IS LOADED FROM DOS
5 REM USING OPTION L. CHAR8.OBJ
6 REM USES ATARI MEMORY AT PAGE 6
7 REM IE DECIMAL LOCATION 1536
8 REM CHAR8.OBJ IS USED TO PUT TEXT
9 REM ON GR.8 SCREENS
10 REM A=USR(1536,X,Y,ADR(T$),LEN(T$))
11 REM WILL PLOT TEXT STRING T$ AT
12 REM TEXT SCREEN POSITION X,Y
18 OPEN #3,8,0,"D:CHAR8.OBJ"
20 TRAP 80
30 READ X
40 PUT #3,X
50 GOTO 30
80 CLOSE #3
500 DATA 255,255,0,6,165
501 DATA 6,104,201,4,240
502 DATA 9,170,240,5,104
503 DATA 104,202,208,251,96
504 DATA 104,133,215,104,133
505 DATA 214,104,104,168,104
506 DATA 133,217,104,133,216
507 DATA 104,104,240,236,133
508 DATA 212,24,165,214,101
509 DATA 88,133,214,165,89
510 DATA 101,215,133,215,152
511 DATA 240,15,165,214,105
512 DATA 64,133,214,165,215
513 DATA 105,1,133,215,136
514 DATA 208,241,132,221,160
515 DATA 0,132,220,177,216
516 DATA 160,0,170,16,1
517 DATA 136,132,213,138,41
518 DATA 96,208,4,169,64
519 DATA 16,14,201,32,208
520 DATA 4,169,0,16,6
521 DATA 201,64,208,2,169
522 DATA 32,133,218,138,41
523 DATA 31,5,218,133,218
524 DATA 169,0,162,3,6
525 DATA 218,42,202,208,250
526 DATA 109,244,2,133,219
527 DATA 164,221,177,218,69
528 DATA 213,164,220,145,214
529 DATA 200,132,220,196,212
530 DATA 208,182,24,165,214
531 DATA 105,40,133,214,144
532 DATA 2,230,215,230,221
533 DATA 169,8,197,221,208
534 DATA 159,96

```

I would like to give credit to Doug Crockford (FEB 81) for CHAR8.OBJ. But I don't have any other reference and I don't remember how I acquired the program. Doug, thank you.


```

1 REM RR MILLER, 18 MAR 88
2 REM TEST USING CHAR8.OBJ
3 REM ONLY WORKS IF YOU LOAD
4 REM CHAR8.OBJ FROM THE DOS MENU
5 REM USING OPTION L
10 DIM T$(40)
20 T$="TEST STRING"
30 COLOR 3
40 GRAPHICS 8
45 REM FRAME THE GR 8 SCREEN
50 PLOT 0,0:DRAWTO 319,0
60 DRAWTO 319,159:DRAWTO 0,159
70 DRAWTO 0,0
75 REM NOW TEST CHAR8
80 A=USR(1536,1,5,ADR(T$),LEN(T$))
90 INPUT Z

```

HELPFUL TIPS (RR Miller)

I have found the following tips to be helpful and am passing them along.

SCROLL/NO SCROLL - You can pause and continue printing of information on your computer's screen by holding down the CONTROL key and alternately hitting the number one (the key just to the right of ESC). CONTROL 1 actually halts the computer and can be used to halt anything, ie, games, etc.

OPTION button on boot - Holding down the OPTION button when booting from disk will disable the built in BASIC and the computer will boot directly to DOS.

COPY - Most DOS programs will let you copy files. Did you know you can usually COPY anything to anything? Next time you are in the DOS menu, pick COPY and at the prompt try this with a text file.

D1:Yourfile.TXT, E:

DOS should copy the selected file directly to your computer screen. IE, this is a way to view files directly from DOS. You can also copy files directly to the printer by using COPY

D1:Yourfile.TXT,P:

You can also copy from the editor directly to disk. Again pick COPY and try the following:

E:,D1:Yourfile.TXT

You can now type text as you like. To end the copy use CONTROL 3, ie, hold down CONTROL and hit the 3. This tells the Atari it is at the end of file, which terminates the COPY command. When typing directly to the editor (E:) you must still obey the limit of around 120 characters per line of text, ie, you must hit the RETURN button after typing a couple lines of text or the editor will lose part of the line.

And last, you can COPY from editor direct to printer as follows:

E:,P:

Again, use the RETURN button to keep from overflowing the editor line length limits.

SUPERDOS (RR Miller)

I received a demo copy of SUPERDOS, read the manual and used it moderately. The SUPERDOS information is worth distributing and so what follows is an extract from part of the SUPERDOS manual. If anyone is interested in evaluating SUPERDOS, I will have it at the club meetings.

WHAT IS SUPERDOS?

SUPERDOS consists of six files, all with the extender .SYS. The files are:

DOS.SYS - the file management system, similar to Atari DOS 2.0 and 2.5's DOS.SYS. It keeps track of files and lets other programs manipulate them.

SDUP.SYS - provides a menu so that one can manipulate files directly. It also adds a couple of functions, like Copy. It is similar to DOS 2.0 and 2.5's DUP.SYS.

AUX.SYS gives you access to some seldom used functions.

SBAS.SYS is a special program for running BASIC programs automatically.

DOC.SYS is the documentation (instruction manual).

AUTORUN.SYS is the routine which prints out DOC.SYS.

SUPERDOS FEATURES:

SUPERDOS works with all Atari 400/800/600XL/800XL/1200XL/65XE/130XE computers and the XE Game Machine. Supports Single, Enhanced (Dual), and Double density. Automatically configures to the density of the disk in the drive. Density of each drive is displayed at the top of the screen. Copy files between different density disks with only one drive. Automatically finds and sets up largest RAMdisk possible. Supports 130XE compatible 128K, 256K, and 320K RAMdisks. Supports Axlon compatible 128K and 256K RAMdisks. Automatically copies files with .RAM extender to RAMdisk. I/O defaults to RAMdisk if drive 1 is not available. SDUP.SYS available instantly, no MEM.SAV (even on 800s). Short DOS.SYS and SDUP.SYS files leave maximum space for you. RESTORE files which have been DELETED or left OPEN. Directory can display DELETED and OPEN files. Automatically TRACE and PATCH to recover damaged files. Single keystroke menu (no Returns). Clear English prompts. Concise double column display lists 40 files at once. Full screen scroll, won't wipe out filename you were about to use. Screen border color indicates type of operation. Use upper and lower case, inverse and numbers in filenames. Adjust the key delay and repeat rate for XL/XE (fast keyboard). Write with or without verify, toggle from menu. A Binary Save that even saves cartridges. Support for high speed transfer with SUPERMAX and US Doubler. Skewed sectors for even higher speed with SUPERMAX. Format disks in any density. Write DOS.SYS and SDUP.SYS or DOS.SYS only. Copy all .SYS files except DOS.SYS using wild cards. True sector copier copies boot disks, skips empty sectors. Option to format destination disk during disk copy. Copy sectors and display bad sector numbers. Copy to and

from cassette (C:) using long or short IRG. Display the configuration block for non-Atari disk drives. Enter sector numbers and addresses in hexadecimal or decimal. Handle up to eight double density files open concurrently. Handle up to four double density drives plus a RAMdisk. Easy to change file buffers and drive buffers, no POKes. Copy from DOS 3 files using one or two drives and wild cards. SUPERBIN - a compact boot program which displays menu of binary files and runs them. SUPERBAS - a compact AUTORUN.SYS program which displays menu of BASIC files and runs them.

THE VARIOUS DISK DENSITIES

There are three common disk density formats used by Atari and Atari-compatible disk drives. SUPERDOS supports them all, plus a special oversize RAMdisk format:

SINGLE - 720 sectors of 128 bytes. Atari 810 format.

ENHANCED - 1024 sectors of 128 bytes.

Atari 1050 format (Atari calls it Dual density).

DOUBLE - 720 sectors of 256 bytes. Used by Amdek, Astra, ATR-8000, Happy, Indus, Percom, Rana, SUPERMAX, Trak, and US Doubler.

XTENDED - 1024 sectors of 256 bytes. 130XE compatible 320K RAMdisk.

SUPERDOS (\$20.00) is available from

Charles Cherry
Technical Support
205 Peoria St
Daly City, CA 94014

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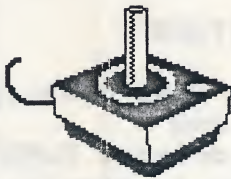
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The JULY 8-Bit meeting will be held on July 14th at the Rec Center, 10540 Caminito Baywood, in Mira Mesa at 7:00 p.m. The ST beginners/hands-on workshop will be held at North Park Rec Center (Across from Folsom's Racquetball Court) July 7th at 6:30 p.m. The regular ST meeting occurs on July 18th at the North Park Rec Ctr., Social Room facility, at 6:30 p.m.